Obeying God Before Others January 15, 2023

*Acts 5:27-42 Series: Unstoppable Church*

As I grow older, I care less what people think about me and more what God thinks of me. I expect to be with him much longer than with you. – Robert Baker

Intro: Willing to do whatever you’re told

1. Put God first because He gives you what this world can’t
2. We all face situations where we’re put on the spot

vv. 27-28 *And the high priest questioned them, saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.”*

1. How did Peter avoid betraying Jesus this time?

v. 29 *But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”*

v. 30 *The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.*

v. 31 *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*

v. 32 *And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.*

* Can you think of a time when your convictions were put on the spot?
* What has Peter experienced since he famously denied Jesus that may have given him courage before the high priest?
* What does it mean that God “gives repentance” to people?

1. Put God first because it’s painful to oppose Him
2. Pressure grows when questioning becomes angry

v. 33 *When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.*

1. Backing the wrong horse ends painfully

v. 36 *For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.*

v. 37 *After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.*

v. 38 *if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail*

1. God can’t be stopped

v. 39 *… if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!*

2 Chronicles 13:12 *O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you cannot succeed.*

Proverbs 21:30 *No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the LORD.*

* The high priest would have said that he had beaten and imprisoned the apostles out of devotion to God. How can you know that you’re truly obeying God and not just deceived?
* We usually view sin as something that God says is wrong, but how does it change how we see sin if we understand that it is also rebelling against God or opposing Him?
* Are there times when something more than Gamaliel’s advice in v. 38 is needed to address people in the church?

1. Put God first because His approval means more than anything
2. What we believe is tested when we face pain and loss

vv. 39-40 *So they took his advice, and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

1. There’s joy in facing the world’s dishonour for Christ

v. 41 *Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*

Romans 5:3 *we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance*

James 1:2-3 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

Matthew 5:11-12 *Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

1 Peter 4:13 *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

1. Obedience doesn’t let up in the face of pressure

v. 42 *every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus*

* What was so awful about being beaten in the first century?
* Why did the apostles consider it a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer dishonour for Christ’s sake?
* How does suffering produce endurance?
* What do you want to take with you from the study this week?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Acts 6:1-7

Notes